

Colleen Gray  
366 Shumard Branch  
Oxford, Mi 48371

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of every student that faces the horrible situation of bullying in our school systems on a daily basis.

My son, Patrick McMeans, is one of these victims. Neither the schools nor the laws have protected him.

Patrick McMeans became a victim of bullying from the time he started school. Patrick was born with severe hearing issues. He went through numerous surgeries to gain full hearing. When he started school in Oxford, Michigan he was just starting to hear. When another kid would try to talk to Patrick, he had no understanding of what they were saying to him, nor could he communicate back to them. The sounds he was hearing for the first time in his life scared him. His reaction was to sit under his desk at school and cry. Kids quickly started taking advantage of his situation. He became a target. He was made fun of and physically hurt.

During his first 4 years of school he attended Leonard Elementary School. There was a student in particular, Adam Womble that hurt Patrick daily. Adam would take Patrick's head and smash it into a locker. In gym he took a bowling pin and hit him across the shins on his legs as hard as he could. The principle Joyce Brasington ignored it all and tried to blame Patrick saying he was making it up and there were no violent acts against Patrick in her school. Yet daily he came home bruised and with knots on his head from the beatings. While in Leonard Elementary School, several times Patrick tried to run away from school. The more I pushed the more she turned incidents against Patrick and made up stories of Patrick hurting other kids. I was in a constant battle with her. I finally came to the point in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of telling her I was tired of her lies and negligence in these situations. Her response was for me to home school Patrick. Then during the spring of his 4<sup>th</sup> grade year, Patrick was suspended over beating up a kindergartner. I called Joyce Brasington at this point and informed her to get her lies straight before suspending my son. It just so happened that the time she stated Patrick beat up a kindergartner he was out for two weeks having another ear surgery. Her response was to change the date on the suspension to coincide with his attendance. At this point I took it to the school board. At the end of the meeting, the school board changed Patrick's school to Lakeville Elementary starting in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. At the end of this school year, Patrick was abducted by some older kids and dragged into a home where he was beat for three hours. It took Oakland County Sheriffs to find him.

During the next two years there were no incidents at all with the school. During his IEP, the school would tell me how much Patrick had changed. I would correct them and tell them that he had not changed just his environment. The principle of the school, Sharon Karpinski, ran the school excellent. She tolerated no bullying, name calling, violence. The kids were there to learn and had the right to do so safely. During Patrick's time at Lakeville Elementary he received awards from the County and Community for his contributions he made while in school.

Patrick's step up IEP had stipulations in it, since there was only one middle school for the Oxford district and Patrick would again be subject to the same kids that tormented him in the past. Adam Womble was to never be in any of Patrick's classes. The first year he was in one, and of course the bullying began

again. The schools response was they both are in supportive classes and they could not change. This year Adam Womble was in four of Patrick's classes. It took time to get them somewhat separated, but still has him in classes.

This year has been the worse yet. As the kids get older and bond with other kids, they drag them into the tormenting of certain students. Patrick is one of them. The following are some highlights of this school year for Patrick:

A girl named Taylor Reeves kicked Patrick every morning in the groin at the bus stop. He was so embarrassed by this he told no one. After two months he finally told his sister what was happening to him. The school's first reaction was it happened at the bus stop and we are not responsible. When asked about a child's safety door to door, they said they would handle it. Not trusting the school, I called Oakland County Sherriff's to make a report. It was discovered that the schools handling of this situation did not involve them calling her parents, not suspending her and not taking away her bus privileges. There were no consequences for her actions. Taylor is 2 years older than Patrick.

During the same week that the schools was suppose to be dealing with Taylor, Adam Womble and Tyler Davies continued to go sit where Patrick ate lunch and threw chicken bones at him throughout lunch. The school again assured me this was handled. I disagreed with them. Two days later I get the call that Patrick was sitting at lunch, with adults watching, Patrick tried to walk away from Tyler Davies and made the comment to Tyler Davies "I am not doing this", as Patrick walked away, Tyler began to choke Patrick from behind, Patrick turned around and again stated he was not doing this, and Tyler Davies pushed him four times, Patrick again stated I am not doing this and Tyler Davies then punched Patrick in the mouth. Patrick at that point defended himself and fought back, only to get suspended. Adults watched and stated Patrick tried to walk away. The code of conduct states that if you cannot get away, you do have the right to defend yourself. This is not true and is not enforced.

Next came the Damn it game on the bus. Ten high school boys that Patrick did not even know their names would yell Damn it and that was the sign for them to punch Patrick where ever he was open. He got punched in the rib, the head, and the chest. The vice principle, Brad Bigelow, sat in the office and bought up pictures of who he felt the kids were that harmed Patrick. He was able to pick each student accurately. Obviously there have been issues with these same students. Then the famous last words, "We will investigate". The schools reaction was first that it happened because Patrick used a racial slur. When I informed them why this was not true, being that Patrick has cousins of different races, they quickly changed it to Patrick participated in the game. Patrick asked them how, by being punched. This incident was supposed to be controlled by the bus garage utilizing the camera and recording equipment for the buses.

Patrick was assured he was safe to ride the bus, and then a girl named Fantasy was telling Patrick how she had 15 teenagers to beat him up because the ten boys got in trouble, the ten boys also made remarks to him. The school did their normal song and dance routine and told me it was being investigated. They came back and stated all kids denied any interaction. I asked to see the bus tapes. This is when it was made known that the school never really implemented that resource.

Patrick then decided to walk home. When two kids named Jay and Lex followed him home hitting him with ice balls in the back of his head and calling him names. The father of these kids also followed Patrick home in his van.

At this point I kept Patrick home from school for several days. I told the school they had to make sure passage to and from school and while in school was safe.

Patrick finally got to the point that he tried to get expelled from school by breaking a picture and pouring water out of a cup on the floor.

The school has now placed a person in charge of watching Patrick and making notes all day long. There are major discrepancies in the reports. They are writing how Patrick and the kids that have physically and verbally assaulted him joke around and horseplay with each other.

The school also made a statement that it is because Patrick is on the defense that these kids do not like him. I think after 9 years of being physically and mentally abused, you would be on the defense.

I fight everyday for my son to have a safe environment. He is mentally knocked down every day in school, physically abused in school. The school turns the other cheek and pretends it does not happen. The school turns the situation around on the victims, not the assailants.

Every day when my child comes home, I have to deal with the depression that he faces from the assaults in school. I take him to karate 4 times a week, he goes to church 3 times a week, and bass lessons once a week. Trying to instill confidence in a kid being abused in school and a school system that pretends it's not a reality.

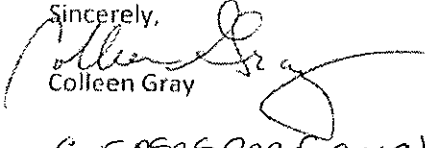
I tried to approach Adam Wombles mother to resolve to situation, only to be told that Patrick might be mature enough to handle working it out but Adam isn't and she really has no control over him.

Adam Womble has been suspended for smoking marijuana on school grounds. He has to be dragged to school by police officers. He already is known by the police officers. He violates more than just my child.

I have tried other parents as well, who are just not interested in dealing with the problem. The schools aren't interested in dealing with the problem. I have written letters to all the people in power in the school, only to be ignored. Who is interested?

After living this nightmare for years and watching other kids and parent live it as well, I feel it is time that harsh laws are put into place, that includes not only punishing the bullies themselves, but to include the parents and schools. This is needed to resolve an issue that claims so many of our children's lives.

Sincerely,

  
Colleen Gray

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crosespeer@yahoo.com

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